

**ATTENTION: © Copyright The Iowa Blind History Archive at the Iowa Department for the Blind. "Fair use" criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976, as amended must be followed. The following materials can be used for educational and other noncommercial purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to the Iowa Department for the Blind. Excerpts up to 1000 words from the oral histories may be quoted for publication without seeking permission as long as the use is non-commercial and properly cited. Requests for permission to quote for other publication should be addressed to the Director, Iowa Department for the Blind, 524 Fourth Street, Des Moines, IA 50309. These materials are not to be used for resale or commercial purposes without written authorization from the Iowa Blind History Archive at the Iowa Department for the Blind. All materials cited must be attributed to the Iowa Blind History Archive at the Iowa Department for the Blind.**

**The Iowa Blind History Archive  
History of Blindness in Iowa - Oral History Project  
Interview with [Name]  
Conducted by [Name]  
[Date]  
Transcribed by [Name]**

**NOTE: Any text included in brackets [ ] is information that was added by the narrator after reviewing the original transcript. Therefore, this information is not included in the audio version of the interview.**

**Elwood "Woody" Miracle, Vinton, Iowa  
Linda Miracle, Vinton, Iowa  
Karen Keninger  
Woody and Linda's home  
5-16-2011**

**Karen Keninger: Good afternoon. My name is Karen Keninger and today is May 16, 2011 and I am sitting in the living room with Woody and Linda Miracle. We are going to**

**do an interview for the Blindness in Iowa, Oral History Project. The first question I want to ask you is whether or not you consent to having this conversation recorded.**

**Linda Miracle: Sure.**

**Keninger: And, Woody, do you?**

**Woody Miracle: Sure.**

**Keninger: Thank you very much. Well, the first thing I would like to ask you, Linda, is just to tell me just a little bit about your background. Where you're from, where you grew up.**

**L. Miracle: Well, I like to call Iowa home because it is home. But I was born and raised in Kentucky. Then Woody and I got married and moved to Ohio and lived there for three years. From there we moved out here. So we've been here forty-six years, and I wouldn't consider any other place as home.**

**Keninger: I see.**

**L. Miracle: Iowa's been very good to us. I can't say anything bad about Iowa.**

**Keninger: Linda, you and...you're both totally blind correct?**

**L. Miracle: Right.**

**Keninger: And have been since childhood?**

**L. Miracle: Um-hum. I had a little bit of vision. I started loosing more and more when I was seventeen, eighteen, nineteen years old. Then had surgery and it was all gone except a little bit of; it was such a small amount. I don't know how to describe it. Anyway, that was my situation. So, I would say probably twenty-one, maybe, I've been totally blind.**

**Keninger: Okay.**

**L. Miracle: And Woody, the same way right; from about one?**

**Keninger: Okay. And you went to school where?**

**L. Miracle: In Kentucky.**

**Keninger: In Kentucky. Was it the Kentucky School for the Blind?**

**L. Miracle: Um-hum. So did Woody and, of course, we knew each other there. We were married and then he got a job in Ohio. We lived there for three years.**

**Keninger: So, you are a Braille reader?**

**L. Miracle: Yeah, except I'm not really good at reading Braille, because I injured my left shoulder when I was thirteen and it never completely healed. From then on, reading was very difficult for me. I could only stand for maybe half an hour or forty-five minutes at a time.**

**Keninger: Because of the arm movement?**

**L. Miracle: Um-hum. By the time I was finished, at that point it was hurting so bad. It really made it difficult for me. You know, without having books on tape and that kind of thing when I was in school, I had to get other kids to read to me. It really was not an ideal situation.**

**Keninger: Tell me about dog guides. You have used dog guides for quite a while. Tell me a little bit about that. We haven't covered that in our interviews.**

**L. Miracle: Well, I think after we moved out here I just didn't feel, I never felt secure using a cane and I've always had some health problems. I decided that it was better for me to try a dog. So, I went to Leader in Michigan. One of my eye doctors was on the board there; he recommended that I go. For, well, until the kids were grown up; well, Rich was in, what was it Woody, tenth grade, maybe? Marcia was in college, first year of college right? Rich would have been in tenth. I figured I'd better get a dog and see how it would go at that point. I had one in the early '60s and it didn't work out at all. I wasn't able, with my shoulder still being bad, I wasn't able to do much. So I'd, even in '88, explained the whole situation to them and they gave me the most wonderful golden, and we just got along beautifully. It was a whole new freedom for me!**

**Keninger: What does that feel like when you can just step out with your dog and just walk?**

**L. Miracle: It's just the most wonderful thing in the world. I depended on either Woody taking me to the grocery store or**

**somebody else; we walked or Marcia or Rich, my son or daughter going with me. When I came home, I suppose it was about a month later, I came home with my golden. I decided I'm just going to go by myself and see how it worked. We did it. It was just wonderful. I don't have to depend on somebody else to oh, go get two or three little things for me. I can just go down by myself and get it.**

**Keninger: How far is the store from here?**

**L. Miracle: A block. (Laughter)**

**Keninger: That's okay.**

**L. Miracle: We've just lived here for a year. We lived on A Avenue for a long, long time. About what would that be, five or six blocks from here?**

**Keninger: Okay, okay.**

**L. Miracle: Then we moved to a little house over on 14<sup>th</sup> Street. We rented that house, because the one we lived in was getting in bad shape and costing too much for us to continue with it. So, we lived there for seven years. This house came available and so we bought it, and it's just been really nice for us.**

**Keninger: Good. So, you've had several dogs since 1988?**

**L. Miracle: Yeah. One I sent back. I don't count her. I had the golden for nine years and then I had Bruce for four years. He was, like, almost four when I got him. I had him for four**

**years, then I got another dog; a yellow lab. He was wonderful. He was just as super as my golden was. Then when he died in November, was it '07, Woody, or '08?**

**W. Miracle: Wasn't it '08 when you got Ivy?**

**L. Miracle: Yeah, I got Ivy. I've had her three years, so it was November '07, and then I got her in April '08.**

**Keninger: What's it like having to switch out the dogs?**

**L. Miracle: Oh, it's horrible; absolutely horrible. Edgar died. It's heart breaking. I get very attached, and I think, probably, most people do. I just...I had to wait a while after Edgar, the yellow lab, died; I had to wait. So, from November to March I didn't have a dog. That was extremely hard. The first, Leonard the golden, he died on Friday. I left for Michigan on Sunday. That was way too hard. All I did there was cry, you know, I just couldn't concentrate on what I was doing. Consequently, that dog went back.**

**Keninger: That was the dog that you?**

**L. Miracle: Three months; anyway.**

**Keninger: So, you chose to wait before you got Ivy?**

**L. Miracle: Yes. I didn't want...They thought it was best and I thought, certainly, thought it was best. I think Woody thought it was best, too; right?**

**W. Miracle: Of course.**

**Keninger:** So, during that time that you didn't have a dog you were partly grieving, but did you feel like you were kind of stranded again?

**L. Miracle:** Yes totally. (Laughter) It's not easy once you've had a dog and get along well with it and not have it anymore. It's awful.

**Keninger:** What's the training like in Michigan when you go for your new dogs?

**L. Miracle:** Well, gee, things are a little bit different now than they used to be. They offer everybody that goes there a GPS system to work right along with your dog. I missed out on that, but I do have...They sent me one a few months ago because they wanted these newer ones tested, and so I do have one. Right after I was there getting Ivy they started giving them out to anyone who wanted them, that came and got a dog.

**Keninger:** Is that a Trecker Breeze?

**L. Miracle:** I think so, yes.

**Keninger:** How do you find that?

**L. Miracle:** Actually, I got a new one that they wanted tested. It's called the Captain. Have you seen that one?

**Keninger:** No. So, do you like it?

**L. Miracle:** Well, yeah, I think so. I still have a little ways to go, but I have used it. The numbers for houses is way off so you have to kind of adjust the numbers. It says when I'm getting close to this house it says, "You are in the vicinity of 374," instead of 314.

**Keninger:** Oh.

**L. Miracle:** And, I don't know why exactly. There was an explanation. What was the explanation Woody, in the paper?

**W. Miracle:** I don't know.

**L. Miracle:** There's one there, but I don't remember.

**Keninger:** But, it'll tell you what street you're crossing. Is it accurate with that?

**L. Miracle:** Yeah.

**Keninger:** And what direction you're going?

**15:00**

**L. Miracle:** Yeah. You are, like, 30 feet from the Avenue or something like that. It tells you if you are going east on 5<sup>th</sup> Street or south on B or north; whatever. You know, so you kind of can keep track pretty good.



**Keninger:** I imagine that you know the area well enough that it's just kind of an extra, since you've lived here for so long.

**L. Miracle:** Yes.

**Keninger:** It might be useful, I guess, if you were out someplace new, or?

**L. Miracle:** There's been lots of times that...I don't know if the weather has a lot to do with whether you know where you are or not.

**Keninger:** Like the snow? (Laughter)

**L. Miracle:** (Laughter) Yes, the snow and even the rain affects me terribly. Everything sounds different.

**Keninger:** Yes.

**L. Miracle:** It's funny. Ivy and I got lost coming home from like a block away and I just kept telling her, "Let's go home." And we ended up coming up through the alley from B Avenue. That was the first time we had done that. She came right to the gate and the Captain said, "You are within the vicinity of Kaytag," which is home.

**Keninger:** That was helpful to know that she was right. (Laughter)

**L. Miracle:** I was in the vicinity. I kept thinking, "Where in the world am I?" I just...I had no clue. And Ivy started

**getting excited and wagging her tail, and stuck her nose on the gate. I thought, “You little stinker. How did we get here?” Oh shoot. (Laughter)**

**Keninger: (Laughter) I can certainly empathize with that.**

**W. Miracle: You need another dog.**

**L. Miracle: Oh, I do not. No...I don't want to squeak here.**

**Keninger: You raised a couple of kids, Linda.**

**L. Miracle: Yep, we did!**

**Keninger: You did! The two of you raised a couple of kids.**

**L. Miracle: You'd better get you're two cents in.**

**Keninger: Tell me about that.**

**L. Miracle: I'll take all the credit for that! (Laughter)**

**Keninger: (Laughter) Shouldn't mothers?**

**L. Miracle: Well it...**

**W. Miracle: Let's get back to the dogs a minute.**

**Keninger: Oh, okay.**

**W. Miracle: I used an illegal dog.**

**Keninger: You did?**

**W. Miracle: For what? Three years, was it?**

**L. Miracle: Un-huh.**

**Keninger: How so an illegal dog?**

**W. Miracle: Well, Jan Borgwardt, she wanted to retire a dog. So, Linda knew the...**

**L. Miracle: Oh, the guy that trained Jan's dog was the same trainer that trained my dog, so I knew it was going to be a very well trained dog.**

**W. Miracle: So, I used her for three years?**

**L. Miracle: Yeah, I think it was either three or four.**

**W. Miracle: And one day I took her for a walk, she bumped me into something. And, I came home and told her. She said, "It's time for you to go and get your own dog."**

**L. Miracle: It was kind of like the blind leading the blind.**

**Keninger: Oh she couldn't see?**

**L. Miracle: Oh, poor Enny. She had cataracts. Her eyes colored by them.**

**W. Miracle: I got a yellow dog.**

**L. Miracle: A yellow lab.**

**W. Miracle: He died. He liked his tummy too much. He had three different surgeries for blockages. He didn't survive the third one.**

**Keninger: Oh dear.**

**W. Miracle: So, then I went back and got...And I, like her, I got a very horrible dog. I brought it home for two months and...**

**L. Miracle: I think it was another situation where, you know, he needed a dog really bad because he'd gotten used to it. And the trainer tried to tell him he thought he should wait a while longer because he really didn't think he had a dog that fit him. But, of course, we said, "Sure you do." (Laughter)**

**Keninger: So, you got this horrible dog.**

**L. Miracle: Un-huh.**

**W. Miracle: It went back and I got this poodle. I've had him since September of '04.**

**Keninger: His name is Strider and he is a standard poodle, which is unusual. Have you seen any difference in a poodle as opposed to a lab, or a golden, or a shepherd; in terms of their work?**

**W. Miracle: Yeah.**

**L. Miracle: Yeah. Very smart, but he walks different, you know.**

**W. Miracle: Yeah.**

**Keninger: Because he's taller and longer legged isn't he?**

**L. Miracle: Yeah, he prances.**

**Keninger: Yeah.**

**W. Miracle: But, now he's got a sight problem.**

**L. Miracle: Yeah, getting to that point, again, where he has to have drops every day in his eyes.**

**Keninger: So, why do you like using the dog, Woody?**

**W. Miracle: I don't know.**

**L. Miracle: You got used to it.**

**W. Miracle: I got used to it. I used to be a very good cane traveler, and now I'm not worth a damn.**

**Keninger: Just because you haven't practiced it, probably?**

**W. Miracle: Yeah.**

**L. Miracle: Yep. He's going to be getting another one pretty soon.**

**Keninger: I understand that they're not using the poodles so much anymore.**

**L. Miracle: No, darn.**

**Keninger: You had dogs before Woody. I remember you had dogs when I was in school, don't I?**

**L. Miracle: Yeah. That was the dogs that I had.**

**W. Miracle: It wasn't my...**

**Keninger: Oh, you've been illegal lots!**

**L. Miracle: But, no he never used it.**

**Keninger: I thought I remember you coming down to school with it.**

**L. Miracle: I did lots of times.**

**Keninger: Okay, that was it.**

**L. Miracle: But, it was too difficult for me because they pulled too hard. I think after a while all of the schools finally got the hint that they can't have 'em pulling that hard. I mean, sure, there has to be a pull, but it can be a little bit. They can just be better trained. Thank goodness that's what their doing now.**

**Keninger:** I've noticed that as well. It is certainly a good change. So, you had Strider, and you had the horrible dog, and you had the illegal dog. Is that it?

**W. Miracle:** No, there was another one between the illegal and the bad dog.

**Keninger:** Oh, that's right. Okay, that's right; a good one.

**W. Miracle:** Yeah.

**Keninger:** What happened with the dog that didn't work out? What was...I had one, too. What kinds of issues did you run into with the dog that didn't work out? People don't understand that concept, sort of.

**W. Miracle:** Okay, the one that Linda had that didn't work out.

**L. miracle:** No.

**W. Miracle:** Now, just a minute. The one you had didn't work out. She ate just about everything, electric wires, anything and everything in the house.

**L. Miracle:** Anything in the house she could find. Chewed up dishtowels; pulled dishtowels off the counter, clothes. It didn't matter what. I just couldn't handle it, especially, after my other dog that was so good. But, then Woody's...

**W. Miracle:** Actually...

**L. Miracle: He howled continuously. If you put him on tie-down he howled.**

**Keninger: Oh, that would be real annoying.**

**W. Miracle: It was terrible, right. Adam was. A lot of time crossing the street, a couple streets, he didn't want to cross right.**

**Keninger: Did he go diagonal, or go corner to corner, or something? Then you get all screwed up as to where you're at.**

**L. Miracle: And, if we passed a dog that was inside a fence or on somebody's porch, he went wild. I don't know how any place would let a dog like that out. They don't always know. You know, a dog that can be so perfect at school and you get it home...I'm sure you've had some experiences like that.**

**Keninger: I sent one of mine back, too. She bit one of my kids.**

**L. Miracle: Oh, good grief!**

**Keninger: She had lots of issues before that, so it was just the final straw, actually. So, tell me about your kids. Tell me...A lot of times...First, just tell me about them; their names, how...whatever.**

**L. Miracle: Okay. Marcia is our daughter. She's the oldest. She graduated here in town from Washington High, and then she went to Culver Stockton College in Canton, Missouri.**



**She wasn't sure if she was going to be...She did Administration of Justice and Psychology. She really wasn't sure what she wanted to do. She was thinking awfully strong about going into police work. Well, after she graduated she moved to Des Moines and got into more social work and got into rehab, doing rehab work. And her boss said she needed to get her Master's Degree. So, she decided to go for it. She went to Drake and got her Master's Degree, and graduated with a 3.6 or something like that.**

**W. Miracle: It doesn't matter.**

**L. Miracle: I know it doesn't matter, but we were just so proud of her.**

**Keninger: Sure.**

**L. Miracle: And, so anyway. She is still working for the State in the Rehabilitation Department. She has Madison County, part of Story. Is it part of Polk, and what's the county that has Creston and Greenville and those places?**

**Keninger: I don't know my counties down there.**

**W. Miracle: Southwest Iowa.**

**L. Miracle: Yeah.**

**Keninger: Okay.**

**L. Miracle: She has those counties. She loves her job, so.**

**Keninger: She's married?**

**L. Miracle: Yeah. She's married and has a son.**

**Keninger: So, you have a grandson?**

**L. Miracle: He's Benjamin, and he's twelve years old. He was twelve in November.**

**W. Miracle: Rich lives in Vinton, and has three kids.**

**L. Miracle: Kiley's fourteen, Connor is twelve; he was twelve in December. And Kinsey's seven, will be in July. And they're all just wonderful kids. He works for Eastern Iowa Farm Service. Lori, his wife, works at a doctor's office--Butterton's.**

**Keninger: It used to be back a long time ago, fortunately, a long time ago; they would say that you couldn't have two blind people married and raising kids because they couldn't do it. So, I have a list of questions I've had people ask me that I thought I would ask you, and just see if you could just tell me a little bit about the hows of it. Obviously, you've raised two successful kids, and you've done a tremendous job. But people say, "Gees, how did ya...how did ya?"**

**L. Miracle: Um-hum. I know.**

**Keninger: So, how did you keep track of them when they were little?**

**L. Miracle: Well, in the house it was kind of easy because you, you know, basically you could hear where they were. I put these little tiny bells on their shoestrings.**

**W. Miracle: But, then they wised up! (Laughter)**

**L. Miracle: Yeah, they really got smart. They would, Marcia would bend over and hold her bells. (Laughter)**

**Keninger: What a cute picture!**

**L. Miracle: Yeah.**

**Keninger: How old was she when she figured that one out?**

**L. Miracle: I think she was about, maybe, close to two.**

**Keninger: Yeah.**

**W. Miracle: I remember one Christmas somebody was doing an article on us.**

**30:00**

**L. Miracle: Oh yeah. It was here in town.**

**W. Miracle: Here in town. She was trying to figure out...Christmas must be so much different. What did she finally end up saying, Linda?**

**L. Miracle: She, in the article she said, "I really wanted to find out how different it was. And what I found out it's, their**

**Christmas is, just like anybody else's. No different than mine. Do the same things. Making cookies and candy and decorating and..."**

**W. Miracle: Why did we move to Iowa? I taught in a public school in Ohio for two years.**

**Keninger: In public school, okay.**

**W. Miracle: At that time, I had ten freshmen classes and the first year I taught just regular grammar, and then the second and third year I taught Literature to one section; half of it for one semester and the other half of the class for the next semester. Actually, I'd signed a contract for my fourth year, which meant you were pretty safe then. But, at the same time we thought it might be good to get into a school for the blind. So, I asked her where did she want to live and she named a few states.**

**L. Miracle: Actually, I think Iowa was at the top of the list.**

**W. Miracle: It probably was. But, I wrote and asked about it and they didn't have...They sent me an application, but they didn't have a job. I'm not going to fill out the application. (Laughter) There was a late resignation and they contacted me and asked me if I was still interested. Well, I got on a Greyhound bus and came out and brought the application. That was it. So, we came here in '65.**

**Keninger: '65, okay. And you started teaching high school and junior high school English, as I remember it.**

**W. Miracle: Yes, eventually. And did some American History, and who knows what else; Braille some; giving tours some, a little bit of everything.**

**Keninger: Well, I remember my seventh grade English teacher, 'cause I remember many things about my seventh grade English teacher. One of the things I remember about my seventh grade English teacher, which would have been you, was that you were a stickler for us turning in decent looking work.**

**W. Miracle: Of course.**

**Keninger: I don't know whether we hadn't had anybody that stickler about it, or you were one of the first. You weren't the first blind teacher we had, but you were the first blind teacher who demanded that our papers didn't come all...every time something...**

**W. Miracle: Everything run together?**

**Keninger: Yeah, run together; blot outs all over the place, writing in the holes. I remember that being a big issue.  
(Laughter)**

**L. Miracle: Oh dear.**

**Keninger: So, you taught at the Braille school for thirty years?**

**W. Miracle: Thirty years.**

**Keninger: Thirty years; and taught a number of different things in later years.**

**W. Miracle: Right.**

**Keninger: And you saw it change from what it was in '65, which was a school...how would you describe it in '65, when you first came?**

**W. Miracle: Well...**

**L. Miracle: Wonderful!**

**W. Miracle: Wonderful! The main thing was that people had a visual problem. Not a lot of other handicaps. Then we became more multi-handicapped and it just, I don't know. Then you had sending the kids to public school, which I think was wrong. And I mean, look at what's going on there now. It's basically no school. Let's see, '95 I was still there. There was a period of time when we would get multi-handicapped or very severely handicapped, and it probably would have been so much better if they had isolated them.**

**L. Miracle: Not particularly isolated, just kept them out of the regular classes.**

**W. Miracle: Well, that and there were parents bringing normal blind kids to school. They would see how bad some of the other kids were and they consequently took the kids back home.**

**Keninger: Do you think that had an impact on why kids didn't come?**

**W. Miracle: Yeah.**

**Keninger: Because the "normal blind kids" didn't totally stop coming, but pretty much dwindled down gradually didn't that? Or did you see it in bigger jumps down? Were there times where all of a sudden like the next year a lot of kids went off to public schools?**

**W. Miracle: Yeah, several each year. And I...I'm like Linda; Iowa is home. However, I did try to get away from it a couple of times.**

**L. Miracle: (Laughter) No...**

**W. Miracle: Well, no...**

**L. Miracle: Well, I know you did, but, you know.**

**W. Miracle: It wasn't meant to be.**

**Keninger: You're still here.**

**L. Miracle: You were thinking of, well, you know, when the kids started disappearing, you know, going to public school. You know, it was natural to think about going somewhere else where the schools...**

**W. Miracle: Superintendents started getting fired.**

**L. Miracle: Both of them.**

**Keninger: Oh dear. There are still some pretty viable schools for the blind in the country, I think; not very many. So, Linda, you said Iowa was at the top of your list when he said, "Where do you want to live?" Why?**

**L. Miracle: I had a great-uncle out here; that homesteaded out here.**

**Keninger: Oh.**

**L. Miracle: Yeah. Up north of here.**

**W. Miracle: Northwest.**

**L. Miracle: Well, was it west? Yeah, I guess. Estherville, Ringsted, Armstrong area.**

**Keninger: Oh yeah.**

**L. Miracle: So, I don't know, it was just kind of a pull, you know, with that knowing that. And one of the other places was Michigan. That was where a lot of Woody's relatives were, and Michigan actually went out before they did here. They were, it was completely devastated there before any of the kids started going out to public school here. So, I guess we are fortunate not to go there.**

**Keninger: Woody you were here in the '60s and a young, bright-eyed bushy-tailed teacher. What do you remember about those years with regard to the Commission?**



**L. Miracle: Oh dear.**

**W. Miracle: Well...**

**L. Miracle: Well, all we heard was bad stuff. I'm sorry to say that.**

**Keninger: No, I understand. I was here, too. I was just...**

**L. Miracle: It just...there was never anything good. We were being pounded from all sides with horror stories.**

**W. Miracle: I actually tried to stay out of it.**

**Keninger: I'm interested in hearing...**

**W. Miracle: The thing that was bad is there were a number of people that always talked bad about all about the Commission, and recommended that kids not go there. I couldn't do that. There were several times, if I felt that someone would benefit, I said they should go. Consequently, I was on some people's bad list for doing that. I kind of stayed neutral.**

**L. Miracle: Yeah, because there were kids that needed it. Needed the extra time and help. But, there again...**

**W. Miracle: Hey, let's put a lighter side on this for a minute. We used to go over to the Casino in Tama. And we were there and she lost all of her money, and came to me, I think I was playing nickel machines, and said, "I need some**

money.” I said, “I’m about ready to leave.” Then, all of a sudden, I hit something. “Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding...” So she’d get excited. She said, “See if somebody sitting over next to you...find out what you’ve won.” So, very casually I took my right hand, reached over, there’s somebody here. I said, “Ah...is there any chance that you could tell me what I just won?” This guy started laughing, “I’d like to, but I can’t see either.” So, there were three blind mice there.

And then, I guess...we’re...When Marcia was in high school and she took Driver’s Ed, was it that time I decided I was going to always have a car? So, we had a car for her. Then Rich had a car and we’ve kept a car ever since. So people say, “Why do you want to own a car? Granted, I’ve got to hire Mitch. Buy a car, hire a driver? But, I feel comfortable in taking the dogs in our cars. We’ve always had cars.

**Keninger:** What do you do about insurance?

**W. Miracle:** I have it--Allied.

**Keninger:** Okay. They just...You don’t have any issues getting it?

**L. Miracle:** Karen, can I let your dog out to go potty?

**Keninger:** Yeah, if you take his harness off.

**L. Miracle:** Okay.

**W. Miracle:** I’ve always been able to get insurance.

**Keninger: Yeah, okay.**

**W. Miracle: I mean, and then sometimes they would put two or three drivers down, but I could let anybody drive.**

**Keninger: Sure. So, you still maintain your own car.**

**W. Miracle: Oh yeah.**

**Keninger: That gives you the freedom to say drive my car and pay the expenses, and just get somebody to take you. That makes a lot of sense.**

**W. Miracle: When the kids were younger, they had paper routes. We helped them and we got two tandem bicycles. Linda used to go with one and I would go with the other, delivering papers. But when they got old enough to drive, that was the end of the bicycles. (Laughter)**

**Keninger: Them and every other kid their age I would imagine. Yeah, the driving thing was always a big deal. Did you work after you quit working for the School in '95? Did you work somewhere else for a while?**

**W. Miracle: Very briefly at...Linda?**

**L. Miracle: Un-huh?**

**W. Miracle: Where was it I did the telephone soliciting?**

**L. Miracle: Oh...**

**W. Miracle: APAC.**

**L. Miracle: APAC.**

**Keninger: APAC?**

**W. Miracle: I did that for not quite a year.**

**Keninger: And that was in Cedar Rapids, wasn't it?**

**W. Miracle: In Cedar Rapids.**

**Keninger: Yeah. So, what do you do for hobbies?**

**W. Miracle: She reads and I'm a sport...I follow sports. She's probably the number one client for the Library.**

**Keninger: Awesome! We like that. Well, is there anything else that would be a fun story to tell me?**

**W. Miracle: No...**

**Keninger: I was going to ask Linda some of these kid questions, but...**

**W. Miracle: Linda...**

**L. Miracle: Just a minute.**

**Keninger: That's okay. I think she's making tea, I think.**

**W. Miracle: Okay. One thing I'm actually...she's having quite a bit of health problems. Earlier she, when we first got married, she wasn't much of a cook because, well...**

**L. Miracle: Woody, call her.**

**W. Miracle: Ivy, come here. She listens just like you do!**

**[Inaudible conversation.]**

**W. Miracle: In Home Ec., one person would do one, you know, one girl would do one thing, part of a thing and then somebody else would do the rest of it. So, she really had to follow the cook; she loves to cook.**

**45:00**

**L. Miracle: Okay. What did she want?**

**W. Miracle: Nothing...**

**Keninger: He's telling me about your cooking.**

**W. Miracle: She wanted to ask you about raising kids.**

**L. Miracle: Oh, okay.**

**W. Miracle: But, I explained the fact about us getting a car and always keeping a car.**

**L. Miracle: Yeah. It's just nicer to have somebody to drive our car instead of having to have the dogs in somebody else's car.**

**Keninger: Do you have trouble finding people to drive for you?**

**L. Miracle: Once in a while. We didn't for a while. Oh a few years, because we had a friend that had retired and she did a lot of driving for us, but.**

**W. Miracle: They are getting older than we are seeing.**

**L. Miracle: Well, Ann is not. She's the same age as we are, but, you know, she's had some health problems and that's cut down on our travels a little bit.**

**Keninger: Sure. There's been a lot of changes in technology since you first came to Iowa?**

**L. Miracle: Oh yeah.**

**W. Miracle: Oh yeah.**

**L. Miracle: And, neither one of us are any good with the computer. We work at it and try, but it just doesn't seem to, we just don't do very much with it. But, you know, the things that are so wonderful is the little things that help around the house, like knowing what the temperature is outside. We had a talking thermometer thing. Knowing what color stuff is because I have an identifier--color identifier.**

**W. Miracle: Color identifier.**

**L. Miracle: Yeah. So, you know, those things are so important. I'm very grateful for the technology, really.**

**Keninger: It means that...**

**L. Miracle: I had a friend that, she worked at school for a while and she took the Braille class. So, she knew Braille and she got a bunch of little beads, sew on beads, and she would make the Braille letters with those beads for me. Sew them on my clothes so I would know what color stuff was. But, she has Parkinson's now and it's just a little bit too hard for her to do stuff like that. So anyway, it was very helpful when I got the color identifier.**

**Keninger: I'm sure. What about cans and stuff. Do you mark those?**

**L. Miracle: Well, we have to because things get too mixed up. And so, we either put the dymo-tape on, or if I have a bag full of one particular thing, like green beans, then we just make a card and put around one can with a rubber band. And then all the other cans I use first.**

**W. Miracle: Granted, when the kids were growing up...**

**L. Miracle: We didn't need to do that. I could ask them. It was easier to keep things straight when you're younger. (Laughter) Would you guys like a cup of tea?**

**Keninger: I would love a cup of tea.**

**L. Miracle: I've got chive or might have...**

**Keninger: Chive would be great.**

**W. Miracle: No, thank you.**

**L. Miracle: All right.**

**Keninger: So, when the kids were little, you had couple, I mean, they could help you with some stuff.**

**W. Miracle: Oh yeah.**

**Keninger: Did you have them read for you or anything like that?**

**W. Miracle: No, not really.**

**Keninger: Just incidental stuff?**

**W. Miracle: Right.**

**Keninger: How did you help your kids with their homework? I'm sure you did.**

**L. Miracle: Not a whole lot.**

**Keninger: No?**

**W. Miracle: Not a lot.**



**Keninger: Pretty bright kids? They did it on their own?**

**W. Miracle: Yeah. They might have asked some dumb thing about English or Math. We would help them, but not on a regular basis.**

**Keninger: Did your kids every get grief from their schoolmates about having blind parents?**

**W. Miracle: One day...I always came home at lunch. That was my break. I was walking back up to school, by the West School, one of the kids said, "Hi blind man!" And I just waved my hand and said, "Hello!" Well, then I heard another kid say, "Shut up you nerd, that's Rich's dad!" So, I don't know as far as kid's grief, I mean.**

**Keninger: They never got into fights and stuff like that?**

**W. Miracle: No.**

**Keninger: Were they in sports, or?**

**W. Miracle: What?**

**Keninger: Did your kids play...?**

**W. Miracle: Sports?**

**Keninger: Yeah.**

**W. Miracle: Rich did some. He has one boy and two girls. The oldest girl is in track and cross-country. His son is twelve, same as Marcia's. He plays football and baseball.**

**Keninger: Do you ever go to the games and meets?**

**W. Miracle: Oh yeah. We go to most of them, once in a while.**

**Keninger: Is there anything when your kids were growing up that you wish that you could do for them, but you, maybe, couldn't because you're blind?**

**W. Miracle: I can't think of anything.**

**Keninger: Okay. And did you really have a regular Christmas? (Laughter) You put up Christmas tree lights and everything didn't you?**

**W. Miracle: Oh yeah.**

**Keninger: Of course.**

**W. Miracle: Oh yeah. But you would be surprised, even now people will say after we moved over here, some people have said to friends of ours, "We go by their house at night and there's lights on." Well, there's lights on because the dogs need lights. But then neither one of us have any light perception, so there have been times when the lights have been on and we haven't known it.**

**Keninger: (Laughter) Oh sure, you just can't forget to turn them off?**

**W. Miracle: Or somebody turned them on and not tell us that they turned them on.**

**Keninger: Oh sure, yeah. Three-way switches can be an issue with that kind of thing.**

**W. Miracle: Oh yeah.**

**Keninger: Well, that's about all the questions that I've got.**

**W. Miracle: Honey...**

**L. Miracle: What?**

**W. Miracle: She's got a question for you.**

**Keninger: Just about raising kids. The techniques that you used to do the things; they're all pretty normal, I understand that. But, what I think is interesting to get it in the record, more or less, I think. You know, we talked about how you knew where they were. Did they ever hide from you? I guess, they did if Marcia figured out to...her little bells ring.**

**Keninger: Did they ever escape?**

**L. Miracle: No, not really. I can't think of any time that they did. That was just like in the house. Rich was a climber so I was always getting him off of something high. A lady at the paper downtown here, she...We were talking one day and**

**she says, “I’ve got a question. How in the world did you change a poopy diaper?” (Laughter)**

**Keninger: And you said?**

**L. Miracle: I said, “Esther, that is just the easiest thing in the world to do. You know where it is and you’ve got to take care of it! (Laughter) Ah shoot...I didn’t know what else to tell her.**

**Keninger: That’s all you can...**

**L. Miracle: I mean, those are things a mother just knows.**

**Keninger: Yes.**

**L. Miracle: And you have everything at hand before you start the diaper, the cleaning rag, the...**

**Keninger: The baby?**

**L. Miracle: The baby! Yeah! So, it’s just funny. Some of the ideas...at Christmas time I’d make candy, like, for church stuff. And this one time, Marcia couldn’t have been more than three years old. About the stupidest thing I ever had said to me was, a lady at church said, “Oh, I bet Marcia is such a big help to you when you’re making candy.”**

**Keninger: (Laughter) Yeah.**

**L. Miracle: Right! She's right up there just a stirring and pouring and...oh gosh! I couldn't believe it. It was just too dumb for words.**

**W. Miracle: Hey, what about they would usually come home...**

**L. Miracle: Oh yes. Marcia and Rich both, when they went to school at this end of town, East Elementary, they would come home for lunch some of the time. Not every day, but, I guess it was in the fall. And Marcia had come home every day for lunch, and this one day she stayed at school and one of the girls in her class said, "Marcia, you're staying here. What's your mommy going to do for lunch?" (Laughter) "So, what's she going to do for lunch?" She's going to eat her lunch, I guess! Oh dear.**

**Keninger: People do have some opinions, right?**

**L. Miracle: Un-huh.**

**W. Miracle: Yeah.**

**L. Miracle: Oh, let's see. One time, Marcia was in high school and one of the kids in her class had lived down the street from us when Marcia was a baby. And he said, "You know, my parents always said they would see a light come on in your mom and dad's house during the night when you were just a baby. What in the world were they turning the lights on for if they're both blind?" So, I tell you, Marcia says, "I don't know, I suppose it was because they thought**

**there wasn't anything wrong with my eyes. And so, if I could see I needed the light. (Laughter)**

**W. Miracle: When Marcia got her driver's license, we headed for Ohio to visit friends. Linda and I thought we didn't want her to drive too much. We were planning on taking two days. Well, little did we know that she and Rich had already worked it out that we were going to go the...**

**L. Miracle: The whole distance!**

**W. Miracle: The whole trip at once. So anyway, we are visiting friends and Linda wanted to go to Niagara Falls. These people that we were visiting...he did everything in the world to try to talk us out of going to Niagara Falls. He didn't think we'd enjoy it.**

**L. Miracle: I said, "Of course we'll enjoy it; why not?"**

**W. Miracle: I guess, the only thing I regret is that we didn't have more money and didn't stay longer.**

**Keninger: (Laughter) Yeah.**

**W. Miracle: We thoroughly enjoyed it. But then we got back to Iowa and Linda was dealing in Precious Moments at that time and we went down to...**

**L. Miracle: Kansas City.**

**W. Miracle: No, but...**

**L. Miracle: Oh, we went to Amana and found out that there was going to be...**

**W. Miracle: We found out that there was going to be a big convention in Kansas City, and of course, she had to go. We go so lost in...Marcia still hates...**

**L. Miracle: She will not drive through Kansas City.**

**Keninger: She was still really young.**

**L. Miracle: Not too...sixteen.**

**Keninger: Yeah.**

**L. Miracle: Nope. She says, "I am not going to drive through Kansas City." (Laughter)**

**Keninger: That's pretty interesting, what people think. I remember one of my daughter's teachers telling us that they thought that she didn't get enough visual stimulus since I was blind. I'm not sure quite how that worked. (Laughter) She happens to be a very visual person.**

**L. Miracle: Oh dear. Well, I think the thing that I did not do with Marcia, that I really didn't know any better, was we didn't actually play ball with her enough. It really would have, I think, been better. She would have been better in sports if we had. And, you know, it was a matter of sitting down on the floor and rolling the ball to her and making her roll it back. That would have been nice. But, we didn't know enough to do that.**

**W. Miracle: I told Karen about the paper route.**

**Keninger: Oh, I loved that.**

**L. Miracle: Yeah we had paper routes. Oh my goodness, too many.**

**W. Miracle: Two tandem bikes.**

**L miracle: Um-hum, which worked out pretty good.**

**Keninger: Yeah. I had a little red wagon to pull when I had helped with the paper routes.**

**L. Miracle: It's good for the kids to have jobs. I think a lot of parents today don't push that, really. I mean, as much good as Rich got out of it he doesn't push his kids to do it. The older ones baby-sit, and they make a lot more money than we used to when we'd baby-sit. But, it was a good learning experience for them to have the responsibility.**

**Keninger: As much as I hate to, I think I had better start thinking about packing up. But, thank you so much. This is just what I was hoping for. (Laughter)**

**L. Miracle: Well, I hope we were able to...**

**Keninger: Just a casual chat to kind of cover these things. Thank you. I really appreciate it.**

**L. Miracle: His harness and leash is on the back door.**



**Keninger: Okay.**

**L. Miracle: He was standing there crying and so I figured he needed to go.**

**Keninger: He probably did because he wouldn't earlier.**

**1:02:54**

**(End of Recording)**

**Deb Brix**

**8-10-2011**